

# The Association Between Family Relationships and Fathers' Psychological Wellbeing

## Research Questions

- How is the quality of father-child or father-mother relationship related to fathers' depressive symptoms?
- Does the association vary by level of education?

## Significance

- Men are often understudied and under diagnosed in regard to depression (Kessler et al, 1994).
- Paternal depression can have long lasting and damaging effects on children's wellbeing (Anderson et al, 2005).

## Background

- Divorced fathers are likely to experience psychological distress, such as depression, as a result of a decline in the quality of relationship with their children (Shapiro & Lambert 1999).
- Poor marital relationship quality has been found to be a vulnerability factor associated with depression in men (Roy 1981).
- The National Comorbidity Survey in 1994 found that men with lower educational levels showed higher rates of depression (Kane & Garber 2004).

## Hypothesis

- Fathers who have poor parent-child and romantic relationships will be more likely to have clinically significant levels of depression.
- These associations will be greater for fathers without college degrees.

## Data and Sample

- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (SECCYD), spanning from birth to age 15.
- Limited to fathers living with children when their children were grades 3 and 5 (N = 592).

## Dependent Measure

### Fathers' Depression (Grade five)

- Fathers' depression is measured using CES-D Scale (Randolf 1997). Possible scores ranged from 0-60 with scores of 16 being clinically significant.

Non-clinically significant	86.58%
Clinically significant	13.42%

## Independent Measures

### Father-Child Relationship Quality (Grade three)

- Fathers were asked fifteen questions regarding their relationship with the focal child.  
\*A list of questions is available upon request

Poor/Unsatisfactory	32.12%
Good/Satisfactory	67.87%

### Father-Mother Relationship Quality (Grade three)

- Fathers were asked six questions regarding their relationship with their spouse or partner who lived with them.  
\*A list of questions is available upon request

Poor/Unsatisfactory	41.84%
Good/Satisfactory	58.16%

## Control Measure

- Fathers' Education
 

Less than College Degree	48.12%
College Degree+	51.88%

## Analysis

- Cross tabulation and Chi-square test using SAS

## Results

Figure 1. Association Between Father-Child Relationship Quality & Fathers' Depressive Symptoms by Education

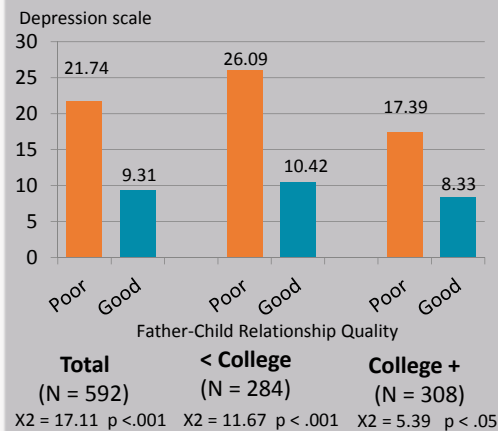
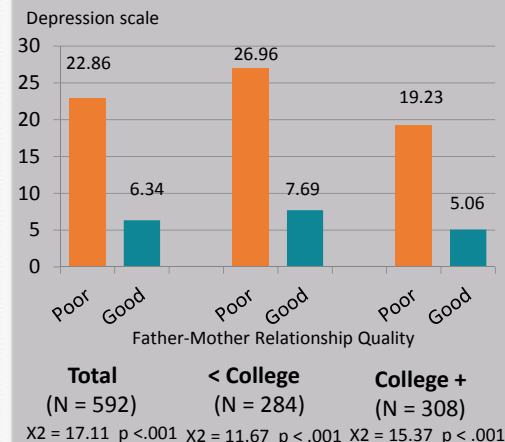


Figure 2. Association Between Father-Mother Relationship Quality & Fathers' Depressive Symptoms by Education



## Summary and Concluding Thoughts

- Fathers with poor/unsatisfactory parent-child relationships are more likely to report clinical levels of depression.
  - This relationship appears to be stronger for those with less than a college degree.
- Fathers with poor/unsatisfactory relationship qualities with their children's mothers are more likely to report clinical levels of depression.
  - This relationship appears to be stronger for those with less than a college degree.
- As hypothesized, the quality of both relationships is related with fathers clinical depression—These associations appear to be stronger for fathers without a college degree.
- Considering lack of resources found among those without a college degree, future policy decisions should focus on this disadvantaged population.

## References

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- This research is supported by funding from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development awarded to Dr. Kei Nomaguchi (1R15HD083891-1).